

CONFIDENTIAL

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25X1

6 April 1962

DOCUMENT NO. 43
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1990
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: _____ REVIEWER:

24 JUN 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Internal Situation in Cuba

REFERENCES: A. NIE 85-62, "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba,"
dated 21 March 1962

B. Memorandum for the Director, "Comment on Tad Szulc's
New York Times Article on Castro's 26 March Speech,"
dated 5 April 1962

1. At the request of the we have re-viewed the conclusions of NIE 85-62 relating to the internal situation in Cuba in the light of more recent information. We perceive no reason to modify those conclusions except insofar as the Escalante affair enables us to speak more positively on the subject of Castro's present relations with the veteran Cuban Communists.

25X1

2. The salient conclusions of NIE 85-62, which we now re-affirm, are:

a. The initial popular enthusiasm for the Revolution has steadily waned. Nevertheless, Fidel Castro retains the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

positive support of at least a quarter of the population. There is some active resistance in Cuba, but it is limited, uncoordinated, unsupported, and desperate. The majority of the Cuban people neither support the regime nor resist it, in any active sense.

(Paras. 7-10)

b. Cuba is now faced with an economic crisis attributable in large part to an acute shortage of the convertible foreign exchange required to finance greatly needed imports of foodstuffs and of replacement parts for machinery and equipment of US origin. The next year or two will be a critical period for the Castro regime. Nevertheless, the regime's apparatus for surveillance and repression should be able to cope with any popular tendency toward active resistance. In the circumstances, increasing antagonism toward the regime is likely to produce only a manageable increase in isolated acts of sabotage or of open defiance on the part of a few desperate men. (Paras. 6, 11-12)

3. In NIE 85-62 we discussed at length Castro's relations with the veteran Communists of the PSP, the prerevolutionary Communist party, and the prospect that the latter would eventually gain control of Cuba through working control of the ORI, the prototype of the more inclusive Communist party now in process of

- 2 -

~~SECRET~~

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

organization. (Paras. 30-37, 133) The Escalante affair sheds new light on this subject and requires modification of our conclusion that, while Castro would remain the titular leader, the real power in Cuba would probably come to be vested in a collective leadership dominated by the veteran Communists. (Para. 2)

4. Castro himself has now confirmed our estimate of tension within the ruling group, between the "old" and the "new" Communists. Escalante was purged precisely because he was working toward the end which we judged to be likely on the basis of the information available through mid-March. It is evident, however, that Castro has now checked the trend toward old-line Communist control of the ORI and has reasserted his personal leadership of Cuban communism.

5. It would be a mistake, however, to interpret this development as a revulsion by Castro from communism, or as an open split between Castro and the veteran Cuban Communists. Castro's dramatic expulsion of Escalante was almost certainly intended as a warning to other old-line Communists against distinguishing between themselves and the new Communists, but, in deploring such tendencies, Castro called for unity within the new party organization. Blas Roca responded by echoing Castro's denunciation of Escalante, making Escalante the scapegoat for the old Communist group.

- 3 -

~~SECRET~~

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

6. Tension and mutual distrust between the "old" and the "new" Cuban Communists will probably continue, but Castro's goal is still the communization of Cuba -- with the collaboration of the old Communists and the support of the USSR, but under his own leadership and control. Castro has now reasserted his authority and the old-line Communists will take care to avoid provoking him further. However, their covert struggle for power within the regime will probably continue.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



SHERMAN KENT
CHAIRMAN

25X1

- 4 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL